

HCS HB 390 -- ANESTHESIOLOGIST ASSISTANTS

SPONSOR: Behnen

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Professional Registration and Licensing by a vote of 11 to 5.

This substitute establishes registration for anesthesiologist assistants under the State Board of Registration for the Healing Arts. The substitute:

(1) Allows anesthesiologist assistants to assist a supervising anesthesiologist in formulating and executing an anesthesia care plan for patients. Anesthesiologist assistants are given authority to obtain patient history, perform relevant physical exams, pretest and calibrate anesthesia delivery systems, interpret information while in consultation with an anesthesiologist, establish airway intervention, administer vasoactive and other anesthetic drugs, adjust vasoactive infusions, and provide tasks not prohibited by law while under the supervision of an anesthesiologist;

(2) Requires an anesthesiologist to be responsible for the oversight of the health care services rendered by an anesthesiologist assistant;

(3) Prohibits anesthesiologist assistants from prescribing medications and controlled substances, conducting activities which are beyond the scope of practice of the supervising anesthesiologist, practicing without the supervision of an anesthesiologist, and holding themselves out as being a physician;

(4) Prohibits anesthesiologists from billing for services performed by an anesthesiologist assistant;

(5) Requires applicants for licensure to make application with the board and pay the required fees;

(6) Allows the board to issue temporary and inactive licenses;

(7) Requires retiring anesthesiologists assistants to file an affidavit with the board stating their intentions and the date of retirement;

(8) Gives the board the authority to negotiate reciprocal compacts with other states and to license qualified applicants from other states;

(9) Requires the board to promulgate rules pertaining to

application forms, certification, registration, and fees;

(10) Grants the board the authority to refuse to issue, suspend, or renew licenses and describes the allowable causes for the board to file complaints with the Administrative Hearing Commission;

(11) Prohibits any person from practicing as an anesthesiologist assistant without a license, unless the person is in a certified program under direct supervision of an anesthesiologist or is in a hospital residency program to become an anesthesiologist;

(12) Requires that all continuing education be met prior to license renewal;

(13) Requires all fees collected by the Division of Professional Registration to be deposited to the credit of the Board of Registration for the Healing Arts Fund;

(14) Requires all supervising anesthesiologists to adopt protocols that delineate the services provided and the manner of supervision;

(15) Gives the governing boards of hospitals the authority to limit the functions and activities of anesthesiologist assistants;

(16) Prohibits persons from holding themselves out as being anesthesiologist assistants without being duly licensed by the board; and

(17) Establishes the Advisory Commission for Anesthesiologist Assistants.

Violation of any provision of the substitute is a class A misdemeanor.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Net Effect on Board of Registration for Healing Arts Fund of \$0 in FY 2004, an income of \$19,839 in FY 2005, and a cost of \$10,146 in FY 2006.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that there is a shortage in the anesthesia profession, particularly in rural areas. Currently, certified registered nurse anesthetists are the only persons who are providing anesthesia services, and there are not enough practicing in this state to fill the void. This bill in no way restricts the practice of nurse anesthetists and would help to relieve that shortage by accessing professionals from another source.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Behnen; Dr. Toni Smith; Missouri Society of Anesthesiologists; Dr. Nathan Berry; Dr. Kent Blankey; Dr. Chris Felling; Missouri Hospital Association; Missouri State Medical Association; and Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that there are certain safety concerns regarding anesthesiologist assistants. This profession has been around for 30 years, but there are only two schools in the United States. There are differences in the educational and training background between anesthesiologist assistants and certified registered nurse anesthetists. It is felt that anesthesiologist assistants don't possess the concept of total patient care because of their training background. They also feel that this will not address the rural problem, due to the high salaries in metropolitan areas.

Testifying against the bill were Missouri Association of Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists; Missouri Nurses Association; Mark Miller; and Kevin Schnieder.

Bob Dominique, Legislative Analyst